

Draft Proposals FY 2007 OHMVR Grant Program Applications

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Palm Springs - South Coast Field Office

Draft Proposals

Project 1: Palm Springs/South Coast Law Enforcement

Project Type: Enforcement

Total Requested: \$ 206,992(Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: Increase law enforcement outreach and presence to promote safe and legal Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreational use on public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC) is requesting \$197,135 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$206,992) to fund Ranger positions, equipment and materials.

The PSSC Field Office manages 1,630,000 acres of public lands located near the highest population density urban areas of California; (i.e., Riverside County, Orange County, Western San Diego County, Southwest San Bernardino County, and Southwest Los Angeles County.) Growing demands for OHV recreation in southern California has led to increased use of public lands.

Funds to support this project would supplement federally appropriated funds which support BLM's law enforcement program. In the Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, the BLM law enforcement program is generally focused in areas with the highest Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use.

To carry out law enforcement functions, BLM purchases and maintains vehicles and equipment dedicated to law enforcement personnel. Equipment includes 4X4 patrol vehicles, all-terrain vehicles to access difficult areas, safety equipment (helmets, boots, and other riding gear), emergency medical supplies, digital cameras, communications equipment, etc.

Rangers educate the public in OHV opportunities, discourage unlawful behavior and protect public lands for future enjoyment. Additionally, rangers ensure safe riding habits, the use of appropriate equipment, and protect public land users.

A law enforcement presence on public lands is essential for the public to safely recreate on public lands.

Past Project Accomplishments: See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 2: Palm Springs Trail Maintenance

Project Type: Trail Maintenance

Total Requested: \$ 336,032(Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: To sign, maintain and groom designated routes of travel on public lands and repair public lands damaged by OHV use occurring off of designated routes. The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC) is requesting \$320,030 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$336,032) to support personnel and materials.

In 2002, BLM approved the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO). The plan designated 1,227 recreational routes of travel within an area of 3,824,205 acres in Eastern Riverside County between the Coachella Valley and Blythe, California.

These routes of travel are generally open to public OHV use, but many of these routes have not been signed on the ground to indicate they are open and available for OHV use. Because there are no areas open to unrestricted OHV use (free play areas) in Riverside County, designated routes of travel on public land are experiencing increasingly heavy use.

These routes of travel have their origins from old prospector trails, military routes and even historical stagecoach lines. The designated routes of travel on public lands were not designed for the OHV use they now support and seasonal rainfall often make these routes unpleasant to use or unusable. When that occurs, OHV use off of designated routes is likely to increase, especially in areas where routes of travel have not been properly signed.

This project would allow BLM to properly sign and maintain designated routes of travel. Clearly signed and maintained routes will enhance recreational opportunities on public lands and decrease OHV use off not on designated routes.

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 3: NECO Route Signing Equipment

Project Type: Equipment (Non CESA)

Total Requested: \$ 78,278 (Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC) is requesting \$74,550 total project costs (plus 5%

administrative costs equals \$78,278) to purchase equipment to sign and maintain designated routes of travel on public lands.

In 2002, BLM approved the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO) an amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The Plan designated 1,227 recreational routes of travel within an area of 3,824,205 acres. These designated routes of travel provide OHV travel opportunities on public lands in Eastern Riverside County between the communities of Palm Springs and Blythe, California.

The BLM requires certain equipment to notify the public of designated routes of travel and maintain those routes. Funds for this project would purchase Carsonite signs, metal interpretive signs, channel posts and signing decals. These materials would be used on the ground to notify the public of those routes of travel which are open to OHV use.

Funds would also be used to purchase two ATVs, one 4x4 utility quad/cart, trailers, tires and security storage unit. Miscellaneous gear such as helmets, gloves, goggles, water packs, boots and tie straps, locking gearboxes and tow ball joints would also be purchased. This equipment will be utilized by recreation and resources staff in trail monitoring and maintenance and to assist other staff requesting OHV support.

Generally, signing would begin inside the Meccacopia Special Recreation Area and will move east through the remainder of the field office. Signing of all routes of travel would be completed in approximately three years. During this grant project period we expect to complete the Meccacopia SRMA and an affected area east of the SRMA.

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 4: Safety Education- Outreach and Volunteer Program Support
Project Type: Safety Education (Non CESA)

Total Requested: \$36,446 (Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: Create two Environmental/OHV Awareness Programs for Kindergarten through 12th grade and Volunteer Training.

The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC) is seeking \$34,710 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$36,446) to assist volunteer educators and the Meccacopia Trail Patrol in an educational outreach program targeted at youth and adults in the City of Blythe and communities of the Coachella Valley.

The proposed Environmental Awareness/OHV Curriculum will be presented to grades K-12, through a volunteer lead programs, visitor use services and outreach by staff and volunteers. The PSSCFO will utilize the successful volunteer program at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve to implement a volunteer training program regarding OHV recreation. A Volunteer Trail Riders program developed by Dick Dufourd and the Central Oregon Combined OHV Operations Group (COHVOPS) would be another component of the OHV Volunteer Program.

The Tread Lightly! Program with its emphasis on proper trail use will be part of the volunteer educational program at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Docents will be trained as Tread Lightly Trainers as well as receiving basic instruction in OHV history and the BLM's policies for multiple use and wilderness protection. BLM recreation and law enforcement staff is Master Trainers in Tread Lightly!

Interactive displays of the Tread Lightly Message will be presented at High School Career Days and during Environmental Fair Days. Volunteer Groups will present Leave No Trace and the Tread Lightly Programs in local schools. A BLM Volunteer Desert Academy Class will be offered three times per year for all volunteers within the Palm Springs South Coast Field Office. The Volunteer Desert Academy Class would include training in hospitality, environmental awareness and volunteer safety.

Additionally, the general public has expressed an interest within the Meccacopia Special Recreation Area for outreach campfire programs on public lands during Thanksgiving, New Years and Presidents weekends. BLM volunteers would use the campfire programs to emphasize the "Tread Lightly!" message: "increase people's awareness of multiple ways to enjoy the outdoors while minimizing impacts to the natural environment."

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 5: Palm Springs Restoration
Project Type: Restoration

Total Requested: \$618,376 (Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: Repair and restore OHV disturbance of desert scrub and desert wash woodland habitat on public lands in eastern Riverside County

The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs – South Coast Field Office (BLM) is requesting \$588,930 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$618,376) to complete this restoration project. Restoration work would be focused in the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and the eastern edge of the Chuckwalla Bench Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA) in eastern Riverside County.

In 2002, BLM approved the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO). The plan designated 1,227 recreational routes of travel within an area of 3,824,205 acres in Eastern Riverside County between the Coachella Valley and Blythe, California.

BLM recently identified approximately 215 miles of vehicle trails and routes in the NECO planning area, none of which are designated routes of travel in the NECO Plan. Heavy OHV impacts off of designated routes have occurred in the Drop 31 (71 miles), Summit Flats (13 miles) and Southern Camp Young (53 miles) areas.

BLM staff will evaluate the suitability of these routes for OHV travel based on environmental, habitat and recreational concerns. Routes which adversely affect habitat, or are otherwise not suitable or needed for recreation would be closed and restored. Restoration will rehabilitate habitat disturbed by a network of vehicle trails and hill climbs within the area. Restoration would include vertical mulch and vegetation disguise as well as refuse removal.

Routes needed and suitable for recreational use may be considered for designation as approved routes of travel.

Past Project Accomplishments: See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 6: Maintenance Trail Tractor
Project Type: Equipment (Non CESA)

Total Requested: \$99,225 (Detailed cost information available on Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet in a separate document)

Proposed Project Description: The Bureau of Land Management's Palm Springs South Coast Field Office (BLM) is seeking \$94,500 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$99,225) to purchase a SWECO trail dozer & hauling trailer, fund routine maintenance of the equipment for one year and fund specialized training of BLM personnel in the use of the SWECO dozer.

The equipment and training would support BLM's efforts to implement planning decisions which designated specific routes of travel on public lands which are open to OHV use. In 2002, BLM approved the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO) an amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The Plan designated 1,227 recreational routes of travel within an area of 3,824,205 acres. These designated routes of travel provide OHV travel opportunities on public lands in Eastern Riverside County between the communities of Palm Springs and Blythe, California.

If approved, this project would allow BLM to groom and maintain designated routes of travel, realign routes of travel, and create obstacles to discourage OHV travel off designated routes.

Growing OHV recreation in Riverside County has led to increased use of public lands. Because there are no areas open to unrestricted OHV use (free play areas) in Riverside County, designated routes of travel on public land are heavily used by the public. These routes of travel have their origins from old prospector trails, military routes and even historical stagecoach lines.

The designated routes of travel on public lands were not designed for the OHV use they now support and seasonal rainfall often make these routes unpleasant to use or unusable. When that occurs, OHV use off of designated routes is likely to increase. The SWECO Trail Tractor would give BLM the ability to maintain designated routes of travel, thereby enhancing OHV opportunities on public lands while at the same time reducing the impact of that use on public land.

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 7: Coors Canyon Planning
Project Type: Planning (Non CESA)

Total Requested: \$76,020 (Detailed cost information is available on the Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet that accompanies this document).

Proposed Project Description: To prepare an environment assessment (EA) addressing the feasibility of designating Coors Canyon as an ATV open area on public lands near the community of Blythe.

The Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs – South Coast Field Office (BLM) is seeking \$72,000 total project costs (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$76,020) from the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR) to complete resource surveys and an environmental assessment on the Coors Canyon area. The Coors Canyon area encompasses approximately 500 acres located five miles north of Blythe, California, West of Midland Road and approximately two miles south of the Big Maria Mountains Wilderness. The EA would address the feasibility of using existing public lands and any need to acquire additional private lands to designate and create an ATV open area.

An ATV riding area at Coors Canyon would provide recreational and educational opportunities for ATV users and divert this use from sensitive environments in the Palo Verde Valley Area. If feasible, the area could include an unloading staging area and picnic tables. Law Enforcement could also utilize the area to teach youth OHV educational programs and train cooperating representative from other law enforcement agencies. Ideally, communicating proper OHV use and etiquette would begin through a

curriculum-based program throughout the school system and the Police Athletic League, working with the Blythe Police Department and then the on-site training at Coors Canyon.

Coors Canyon got its name because it was historically used by local residents to drink and hang-out. Coors Canyon has also been utilized as an illegal dumping zone. With regular law enforcement patrols the area has changed into a safe riding area for local residents and their families.

Because most of the surrounding area is private farm land, the public lands around Coors Canyon offers one of the few possible areas to enjoy ATV recreational opportunities. Private landowners and farmers have stated that they would rather have the youth riding at Coors Canyon then cutting tracks across their fields and support the project. Local residents and city authorities have expressed support for creating a legal riding area within Coors Canyon. Opening this area as a legal ATV Area will decrease illegal trespass onto privately owned lands.

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Project 8: Law Enforcement Equipment
Project Type: Equipment (Enforcement)

Total Requested: \$23,520 (Detailed cost information is available on the Project Cost and Deliverables (PCD) Spreadsheet that accompanies this document.)

Proposed Project Description: Palm Springs requests \$22,400 (plus 5% administrative costs equals \$23,520) to purchase two sport quads, a towing trailer, two light and siren systems and required maintenance for the quads.

The Bureau of Land Management's Palm Springs - South Coast Field Office (BLM) would use the two sport quads to support Law Enforcement contacts and assistance with off-highway vehicle (OHV) users on public lands in our management area. The quads would also be used in search and rescue efforts in terrain unreachable by regular patrol vehicles.

Regular law enforcement vehicles are often unsuitable for travel on some designated routes of travel on public lands. At the same time, BLM is experiencing increased recreation use on designated routes of travel on public lands. The quads would allow BLM to increase Law Enforcement contact and outreach with recreational users. This increased contact and outreach will encourage recreational users to stay on designated routes of travel on public lands.

Additionally, Rangers will contact OHV enthusiasts to promote safe riding habits, the use of appropriate equipment, and an understanding of the state and federal laws that safeguard users and the lands they use. Rangers are most familiar with the lands they

patrol, and can best advise the public on designated routes of travel. Increased law enforcement presence with using proper equipment discourages behavior that could endanger legitimate public OHV users.

Past Project Accomplishments: This is a new project there are no previous accomplishments to report. See attached outline for PSSC Field Office.

Past Project Accomplishments

The following projects were completed within the PSSC Field Office during Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 (October 2005 through September 2006). Due to high summer temperatures no further projects are scheduled until FY2007.

1. The Student Conservation Association crew (SCA) completed eight months of restoration work within the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area. The most significant accomplishment was closing eight hill climbs adjacent to the Red Canyon Jeep Trail.
2. A draft Mission Statement for the Meccacopia SRMA was developed: To enhance the quality of motorized and non-motorized outdoor recreation opportunities, areas, facilities and services on public lands within the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area and to provide adequate management, to redirect use and protect environmental values.
3. Desert Side Tracs conducted a clean-up of Red Canyon and Salt Creek Area in the fall of 2005.
4. The Recreation Staff with assistance from the SCA Crew conducted public outreach in the Meccacopia SRMA during Thanksgiving Weekend.
5. BLM Law Enforcement in cooperation with the Riverside County Sherriff's ROVE team worked to address OHV concerns within the Meccacopia SRMA on the Thanksgiving and New Year holiday.
6. The California Desert District Advisory Council approved a Technical Review Team to assist BLM in preparing the Meccacopia SRMA Plan.
7. Desert Side Tracs 4x4 Club voted to adopt Amy's Wash Road in the Meccacopia in fall 2005. The group adopted Red Canyon Jeep Trail in 1996. BLM will announce the adoption on signs in the fall of 2006.
8. Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Naturalists conducted an initial data collection of bird and plant species associated with a recreational birding location in the Meccacopia Trail System. This trail will be used as a study point for further

National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts. This location will also be utilized for an environment teaching location for recreational users within the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

9. Interagency Law Enforcement Teams donated two officers each to address unauthorized OHV use in the Coachella Valley.
10. The Washington Visitor Use Survey for Meccacopia began prior to February 14, 2006, and concluded on Easter Sunday 2006
11. Desert Side Tracs conducted a clean-up of Amy's Wash Road during spring of 2006.
12. On April 22, 2006, 75 volunteers conducted an Earth Day clean up at the Southern entrance of Box Canyon. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the La Quinta Community Church and the PSS Hikers Club assisted in the event.
13. Off-Highway Survey Teams began on the ground mapping intended to show all (100%) of existing routes of travel on public lands in the Palm Springs South Coast Field Office. Mapping of additional routes within the Meccacopia SRMA is completed.
14. Designated routes of travel on public lands were assigned numbers with an alpha prefix based on regional areas (Chuckwalla Bench = CB). These numbers will be used for on the ground signs and public maps, which will assist Search and Rescue efforts.